

HOW TO CHOOSE THE PERFECT CLOUD COMPUTING SOLUTION

What does “Cloud Computing” Really mean?

“Cloud Computing” refers to the delivery of computing services over the internet. You don’t have to store your data on your own hard drive, because cloud services give you the opportunity to use software and hardware which can be managed by third parties. Through cloud computing you can have access to your data from anywhere with just a network connection.

Cloud services are popular because you can reduce the cost and the complexity of owning and operating IT infrastructure. You don’t have to spend your money on hardware or on an IT expert. Also, they are popular because you can have access from all over the world, you can communicate and collaborate with your colleagues in the same system, on the same documents and files with no restrictions. You can also communicate with your customers, partners or vendors as if they were a part of your company.

All these benefits introduce new opportunities for increased effectiveness in working remotely. The only thing that you have to consider is which cloud collaboration platform is the most suitable for you.

KEY QUESTIONS:

[Is your business ready to move in cloud computing](#)

- Do you need to cut your IT costs?
- Do you need access to your data outside the office?
- Do you want your company to be competitive?
- Do you want to increase your productivity?
- Do you need security for your data?
- Do you need mobility in your company?
- Do you need better collaboration and communication inside your company?

If the answer is Yes, then you just have to find the best cloud vendor for you.

Eight “Shopping Tips” to select the best Cloud Computing Platform

We tried to put together a list of “shopping tips” that can help you choose the appropriate SaaS for your company according to your business needs.

Features and Functions

It is a fact that there are many collaboration tools. Some of them have the basic characteristics, like secure file sharing and external collaboration while other combine the basic characteristics with Project Management, Customer Relationship Management, Financial and Business Intelligence. You have to decide which tool meets your business needs and then to select the appropriate platform. It is true that a platform that combines all the above tools, will give you easier the desirable results.

Security

The Security is one of the biggest concerns. Undoubtedly any cloud environment provides better security than your own data centre. It is important to know where your data is stored, how is backed up and whether your vendor provides security. You want your data to be secure and protected, not only from external, but also from internal attacks.

Customization

This is another important requirement that you should focus on. Your vendor has to provide you with flexibility to meet your requirements and adjust the platform according to your company’s needs. It is very important to have the freedom of customization.

Integration

The vendor that you will select has to provide you with a platform that will be compatible with your existing system. The ability to integrate the platform with the legacy system gives you strong benefits, like familiarity and efficiency. Your employees will have a smooth transition to a new way of operating and working together. Something else that is necessary for the best communication and collaboration of your employees is the use of social media. A true collaboration platform has to provide you integration with your social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and file sharing capabilities (like integration with Dropbox, Google Drive). All these will help your business be more extrovert.

Mobility

The platform that you are going to choose will be your personal assistant and especially when you are on the move. It is very important to connect with anyone from anywhere in real-time. You must be able to have access to your documents and stay connected from any device, so the selected platform has to be applicable to all mobile devices. In 2012, a study by Accenture revealed that 78% of CIOs placed mobility in their top five priorities.

● Pricing Policy

What stimulates every business to move in the cloud is to save money. You don't have to spend more money for any software or hardware, for IT experts, for licenses etc. Make a good search, select the one that combines many tools and meets your needs. It is also critical to select a provider who has the capacity to scale with you and accommodate your growth. Your cloud partner has to be next to you and help you grow! Recent studies have found that disciplined companies achieved on an average 18% reduction in their IT budget from cloud computing and a 16% reduction in data centre power costs (McFedries, 2008).

● User Experience

The user's experience is very critical and you have to make sure that the vendor you selected gives the appropriate consideration to that. People will use the platform, so it needs to look good, perform well and be easy-to-learn. All users should be confident and ready to use the system from the very beginning.

● Support and Maintenance

It is very important to find a provider you can trust. Try to find out his experience, his reputation in the market and his references. Check his website! The competition in cloud computing field is huge, so you have to be sure about the reliability, the quality of service and the quality of support that offers you. Ensure that the vendor will provide you training and technical support.

Remember that every business's cloud provider selection criteria will vary based on the business needs. Selecting a cloud vendor is something like selecting a partner. You want to trust him and you need his support. It is important to choose the best solution for you and your company. You need time to transform your company, but when you achieve the desirable results, your colleagues will be happier, your customers more satisfied and your business more efficient.

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