



Newsletter Vol. 53 - Introduction

Softengine News is dedicated to keeping you up to date with the latest information regarding SAP Business One systems, Softengine solutions and Best Business Practices.

What's New?

Spotlight on Cloud Computing: Why Small Businesses Switch to the Cloud?

Small business owners often have big dreams. Whether that dream is to keep your business small or to grow it into a big business, you want your business to run as smoothly as possible - every step of the way. You might start your business as a sole proprietor with just a laptop and a few software programs. As your business grows and adds employees, you have to start thinking about security, backup, remote access, and coordination of effort.

One of the reasons small businesses switch to cloud-based software is to reap the benefits of big business infrastructure, without having to implement and manage it directly. Until recently, your software and servers almost always resided in your office, where they would be administered by your IT staff. This type of deployment is referred to as "on premise." In the last several years, "cloud based" software has become more popular.

Cloud based software (also called cloud computing) enables companies to access software and servers located in a secure data center, maintained by the software provider. These free or subscriber-based services are delivered in real time over the Internet.

Most of the time your email is an example of cloud-based application. Because it is no longer stored on your personal computer, your data is more accessible to you outside the office.

Small businesses are finding the many attributes of cloud computing very attractive. Here are seven reasons why:

- 1. Cloud computing can improve employee productivity.** Using tools like Online Exchange and SharePoint, employees can easily access documents and emails while away from the office. Many small businesses have employees working remotely, and need both mobility and flexibility. Cloud computing is a straightforward and affordable way of addressing those needs, especially when you are using intuitive, familiar software that your employees already know.
- 2. Cloud computing reduces upfront costs.** Choosing a cloud-based solution for such things as email, document sharing, and web conferencing reduces the upfront cost associated with starting a business. There are no servers to buy. The cloud-based subscription model allows small businesses to easily increase and sometimes decrease their use of cloud services according to their needs.
- 3. Cloud computing boosts collaboration.** Employees everywhere can access and work with the same files in real time - no more emails back and forth with attachments to open. Better collaboration improves productivity and creativity.

4. Cloud computing provides business resiliency. Numerous studies have shown that more than 50% of small businesses will go out of business within a year of a major data loss. In a cloud environment, if you lose your laptop - or worse, your whole office - you can get back to business in no time. All your business information and files are securely in place. Hosting infrastructure with 24x7 technical support provides a high availability cloud environment and disaster recovery without investing in, and maintaining, additional costly infrastructure.

5. Cloud computing is easy. The transfer of business information into "the cloud" is very straightforward. No need to install new hardware or software; no IT administration. It is often seamless to the user. Entering a Sales Order is the same process as saving it to a local server. No training is required.

6. Cloud computing is accessible. Offering easy access and file sharing from any Internet connection, cloud computing allows employee access via smart phone or computer. SAP Business One Mobile app provides access via iPhone and iPad at no additional cost.

7. Cloud computing is secure. In fact, cloud computing can be more secure than a traditional IT infrastructure. Cloud computing providers like Virtustream (Softengine's SAP Certified Data Center provider) build multiple levels of security and redundancy into their data centers. Virtustream's secure network design provides dedicated functional areas, segregated into zones based on level of trust associated with intended purpose, access is denied by default, and there is separation of resources, traffic and data. Access is via custom, secure portal requiring 2-factor authentication with role-based access.

Today's enterprise faces a myriad of IT challenges driven in large part by fundamental shifts in the modern business environment. First and foremost, the rapid pace of competition demands highly agile IT infrastructure and applications, able to quickly adapt to the constantly changing needs of the business. At the same time, organizations are continually challenged to 'do more with less,' creating an environment where fundamental processes must be reengineered to maximize efficiency and minimize time-to-market. Cloud computing has been hailed as a solution to these challenges offering improved efficiency and scale, and enabling dynamic on-demand IT.

The great thing about cloud computing is that it's not an all-or-nothing proposition. Even if you already have servers and an IT staff, you can pick just one application that you think would be better served in the cloud. You might decide that since your sales force is remote, you'll invest in **SAP Business One "hosted"** to manage all your ERP processes - but you'll keep some deployment in house. With few exceptions, a mix and match of in-house and cloud-computing software works just great!

You will be in good company; some of the Virtustream enterprises include: Domino Sugar (3,000 SAP users), the British Transport Police, Allied Irish Bank, Digital Chocolate, MRG, Diesel Direct, Autism Speaks, Goodyear , Kawasaki, Pizza Hut, Honda, Mary Kay and many other household names.

For more information about Cloud Computing and SAP Business One ERP, please contact Barry Lederman: 818.704.7000, blederman@softengineusa.com

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