

The Small Business Cloud Journey

The Startup

When companies are in a startup phase money is usually tight and issues such as accounting and internal systems normally take a back seat. Some cloud solutions are adopted at this stage - primarily for website and email hosting. But for the most part, startups find themselves handling paperwork and recording transactions manually. Unfortunately, ignoring the cloud at this stage can be costly for a startup, particularly as the company grows.

Establishment & Problem Solving

After a year or two, manual processes become more time-consuming. Data stored in manual spreadsheets cannot be quickly retrieved and becomes difficult to manage. During this phase, the business is at a crossroads: it's growing and demanding, but still not yet at the stage where a fully integrated cloud-based system can be afforded. The end of this phase usually results in at the very least, exploration of cloud-connected accounting and outsourced IT services.

Automation

The main objective is to make things simpler and more streamlined. The goal is a better system than the manual, non-integrated one used in prior phases. Data, though now stored in the cloud, is not completely available as quickly as needed. "All-in-one" solutions – which promise to ease expense management, as well as allow for communication between all applications – are strongly considered.

The One-Stop Shop

At this final stage, manual data entry is kept to a minimum. Data is not only easily retrieved externally but complex analytics showing trends and metrics about the business are helping managers make decisions in advance of problems occurring. Certain workflows must be streamlined and automated. New technologies like artificial intelligence, bots and self-service automation become priorities.

