THE BENEFITS OF USING THE CLOUD FOR YOUR ERP, CRM AND DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS SOFTWARE

Business **Solution** Partners
Business Built On Foolproof Technology Implementation

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When you're looking for ways to improve your operations, large and small businesses could benefit from cloud-based distribution business software, such as a cloud ERP or cloud CRM system.

When you're managing inventory and distribution, you want to put your time and resources toward projects that directly add value, rather than dealing with the nuts and bolts of your distribution business software.

But there's a problem: If you're crossing your fingers and hoping your on-premises infrastructure doesn't fall apart, you're probably damaging your productivity, and almost certainly at risk for a costly system failure or losing critical business information.

Many organizations still use on-premises solutions for enterprise resource planning (ERP), but these systems tend to deteriorate over time. Such an ERP platform represents major investments in hardware and software, so it makes sense that some companies try to squeeze the maximum value from the system. To avoid spending money on upgrades or a new platform, some choose to cut corners by running older software or skipping an update when the change seems too minor to justify the cost.

And that's where trying to manage your company's aging infrastructure has a financial downside. If your ERP or customer relationship management (CRM) system is missing the latest updates , its useful performance declines, resulting in manual processes, unexpected hardware repair costs and downtime that damages your productivity. Before you know it, what should be the backbone of your operations is hurting your efficiency and costing you money.

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USING THE CLOUD TO IMPROVE BUSINESS PROCESSES

Here are several ways your organization could improve processes by upgrading to cloud-based business solutions.

Enterprise Resource Planning (Cloud ERP)

- Connects internal team to customers, vendors and external networks through the cloud
- Provides easy access to information for everyone in your organization
- Integrates with efficiency-boosting cloud services, such as document storage and email management

Customer Relationship Management (Cloud CRM) And Marketing Automation

- Gives sales reps in the field mobile access to customer information
- Automates communication tasks, such as follow-up emails
- Offers fast, powerful social media research capabilities

E-commerce Order Management

- Allows a customer to easily retrieve information from your system (such as pricing, product specifications, documentation, contracts, purchases, inventory, etc.)

Warehouse Management Software

- Enhanced connectivity to shipping data from carriers (such as UPS and FedEx)
- Anticipating daily workload improves demand planning and inventory management

Document Management

- Version control reduces errors and improves collaboration
- Better user management secures sensitive documents
- Protected against disasters by cloud backup

SCALABLE SOLUTIONS

While small companies and large organizations have different challenges, the scalability of cloud-based systems offers opportunities for both groups.

In a typical ERP/CRM scenario, many different individuals and teams need access to the system, so there's a real need for a single fully integrated distribution business software solution with the ability to share consistent information with employees in different locations. You may also want to extend the system outside your organization in order to coordinate with your customers, vendors and outside sales representatives. Someone needs to manage that access, preferably without manually installing applications at a number of different locations.

A company that has fewer than 50 employees may not have the budget for an in-house IT team to manage its infrastructure. Often, that means each person wears several hats. You may have one power-user who spends 25 percent of his or her time managing day-to-day IT responsibilities such as data backups, adding or removing users and troubleshooting hardware and software issues that come with having systems on premises. By moving your infrastructure to the cloud, these basic administrative functions are handled by the software provider, freeing up your internal staff and resources for more valuable projects.

A larger organization might not have the same problems providing resources for in-house support, but the IT chores still add up. Typically, it's best for in-house IT to focus on maintaining a streamlined system (and quickly fulfilling orders) rather than managing the company's hardware or infrastructure. Those routine tasks could be outsourced to a cloud provider at a low cost compared to using internal resources.

KEY BENEFITS OF CLOUD-BASED DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS SOFTWARE

Transitioning to cloud solutions offers several important advantages over maintaining your infrastructure on-premises. Here are five benefits of using the cloud for your ERP, CRM and other infrastructure:

1. **Streamlined, automated workflows:** A cloud ERP system helps to automate processes, reducing manual tasks and managing workflows for labor-intensive projects. For a process like purchasing approvals, which used to require lots of emails and paper invoices going back and forth, the necessary steps are defined in an automated task list of sorts that ensures tasks happen in the correct order to get the required approval.

Compared to the hassle and expense of maintaining your infrastructure on-premises, transitioning to the cloud offers several ways to improve performance and enable cost-effective solutions for day-to-day IT administrative tasks.

2. **Agile, self-service tools:** The user-friendly analytics tools and reporting dashboards offered by many cloud platforms improve your organization's agility. They give business users the power to pull the information they need instead of waiting for someone else to email a spreadsheet or report to them after the data has been compiled.

3. **Fewer time-consuming errors:** With a cloud-based system, there's no more need for updating spreadsheets and emailing documents to colleagues. By storing the information in a central database, you end up with better accuracy in collaborative documents and version control, so you stop wasting time looking for the most up-to-date version.

4. **Robust data security and disaster recovery:** Compared to an on-premises solution, a cloud-based solution typically provides better uptime, improved security and redundant data backups. When businesses store crucial information on-premises, they may be unable to recover these assets in the event of a flood, fire or other disaster. With the cloud, you're far better prepared to recover from a disaster. Your essential information is kept safe in secure data centers in other geographical regions.

5. **Improved compliance:** When you're trying to run your own system on-premises, ensuring compliance with regulations and internal controls is a major headache — and failing to keep up presents a significant risk for the company. By moving to a cloud solution, the job falls to your cloud partner, which runs the necessary audits and provides you with recommendations for improving security. When working with a reputable cloud provider, their systems should be independently verified.

Whether your organization is large or small, putting your time and resources toward projects that directly add value is the key to staying competitive. Compared to the hassle and expense of maintaining your infrastructure on-premises, transitioning to the cloud offers several ways to improve performance and enable cost-effective solutions for day-to-day IT administrative tasks.

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Business Solution Partners (BSP) helps you overcome your critical business issues, from inadequate business intelligence and forecasts to time-consuming processes and untrustworthy data. Since 1992, BSP has provided outstanding consulting and implementation services for high-quality accounting and ERP systems, business management software and CRM solutions. From Microsoft Dynamics to NetSuite, BSP is committed to providing rapid, stress-free and on-budget implementations and support.
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