



THREE REASONS WHY THE CLOUD IS CRITICAL TO YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

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IBM is a Major Enterprise Cloud Vendor Partner & Sponsor of the Distributed Computing Industry Association (DCIA)

It's becoming increasingly clear that cloud solutions provide significant benefits, but for small businesses (SMBs) that need to do more with less, cloud is a game changer.

Cloud enables SMBs to innovate faster, engage better with clients and compete on a global scale. Increasingly companies are moving core elements of their business to the cloud via hybrid implementations, delivering on speed, flexibility and customer engagement, but also integrating securely and seamlessly with existing systems of record.

Because of these factors, cloud is being embraced at record rates. According to The SMB Group, 92% of SMBs are now using at least one cloud solution, here are three reasons why:

Better Insight & Engagement

In a world awash in data, 54% of leading organizations use analytics to derive insights from big data, helping them target customers and product opportunities more effectively. As the focus of business decision makers shifts from cost efficiencies in back-office systems to improvements in systems of engagement, cloud is increasingly seen as the most effective means of forging a tighter link with customers. It allows companies to bring together massive and varied sets of data to analyze for more actionable customer insight.

Speed!

52% of leading organizations turn to cloud to drive innovation. No more waiting to make the cut on the IT department's long list of priorities. Consider Music Mastermind that relies on a hybrid cloud infrastructure. The company's core product is Zya, a free music application that allows customers to download clips from their favorite songs and add their own voices in what they call a "mash-up." Very few large companies can claim to sell in 154 countries; Music Mastermind has achieved this in less than a year thanks, in part, to the cloud.

It Grows with You

Cloud users can pace their investments, avoiding big up-front capital outlays, paying monthly as the business scales. Kuma Games, a leading developer of episodic video games, uses the cloud to offer customers a consistently high-performing, graphically attractive and seamless gaming experience no matter where they are in the world or how many users are playing simultaneously.

Whether you're a startup, a large corporation or anything in between, if you're looking for better insight, more engaged clients, faster innovation and global scale, consider exploring cloud solutions and get a step ahead of your competition.

John Mason is the General Manager, Midmarket for IBM, where he leads the company's sales to small and mid-sized companies, with overall P&L responsibility for IBM's fastest growing client segment. He has built and managed a mobile cloud entertainment service with over 1 million active users, and was an early proponent of SaaS solutions. You can follow his thoughts on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).