

10 benefits of extending your business to the cloud



Today, [95 percent](#) of businesses already use the cloud and more than half have chosen to adopt a hybrid cloud model.

For example, [Gatwick Airport](#) work with Solidsoft to fuse on-premise and Azure cloud technologies, integrating data so that everyone who needed access to real-time data updates could access them, all from one source.

This white paper outlines 10 key benefits of extending your data, and consequently your business, to the cloud in this way.

1. Integration

The number of businesses adopting Microsoft Azure grew by [a quarter](#) throughout 2017, but many businesses have decided to only partially transition to the cloud, keeping data on-premises too.

Although [SaaS \(Software as a Service\)](#) applications are becoming the norm across businesses, there's a new service that is making headway: [iPaaS \(Integration Platform as a Service\)](#). CIOs are using iPaaS to extend the reach of existing integration technologies into the cloud, merging the cloud with applications, data, and processes that are already on-premises.

iPaaS offers seamless flexibility between on-premise applications and cloud computing. Tools like Microsoft's BizTalk Server and Azure fuse data stored both on legacy infrastructure and the cloud, giving you complete integration between the two.

2. Delegation

By using a partner to extend your data to the cloud, you can let them take care of your API management, reducing your workload and increasing your business's data transparency. Get easier access to your data and business processes without worrying about back-end management. You can leave that to your IT partner.

One example is Azure's [Service Bus Event Hub](#). This application lets you stream millions of events every second and uses features like Events Hub Capture to ingest massive amounts of analysable data directly to the cloud, all from multiple sources. But, because Azure takes care of your API management, you're free to concentrate on data analysis.

3. Modernisation

Extending your data integrations to the cloud allows your employees to take greater control over their working practices. At present, more than [67 percent](#) of workers use their own devices in the workplace and by 2020, [70 percent](#) of organisations are expected to adopt flexible working practices. This means that applications must securely cater to employee independence, seamlessly working across multiple devices from multiple locations.

By extending your data integrations to the cloud, you can harness the necessary applications that help your employees be more innovative, efficient and productive.

4. Analysis

Extending your data integration to the cloud gives you access to an abundance of useful Azure features like [Azure Logic Apps](#) and [Event Grid](#). These products let you visually create and automate key business processes and connect with more than 100 cloud and on-premise applications. They also allow you to build reactive, event-driven applications with a managed event routing service.

Other benefits include Azure's [Cognitive Services](#) and machine learning applications such as [Power BI](#), which lets you turn insight into action by supplying your business with easy-to-analyse reports and interactive data visualisations. By turning data into insight, these tools can help businesses make smarter decisions.

5. Scalability

[90 percent](#) of rapidly-growing companies believe that cloud technology enables them to grow and scale faster than would have otherwise been possible, according to a Deloitte study.

Today, scaling on-premises infrastructure is a costly exercise. To be able to scale effectively on legacy infrastructure, you must purchase more servers to store more data on, regardless of whether you're using all that space.

By extending your existing data integrations to the cloud, your data storage directly correlates to your business's demand. A [cloud-based licensing model](#) means your business can increase and decrease its capability as it sees fit, paying only for what is used and no more.

6. You don't have to go 'all in' when integrating to the cloud

For a large enterprise, the thought of transitioning from on-premises to the cloud can seem daunting. Many businesses operate solely on legacy infrastructure, and the thought of the cloud can put them off completely. But, using the cloud doesn't mean you must commit to that way of life.

By extending your business to the cloud and deploying integration solutions like Azure Logic Apps, you can effortlessly integrate your on-premises capabilities with the capabilities you plan to launch using cloud applications. This gives you greater control and transparency over your entire business process.

7. Flexibility

You have flexibility over what data and processes you want to extend, too. In areas where you need to conduct rapid improvements, you can quickly test, develop and launch applications straight on the cloud, knowing that most of your capabilities are still on-premises.

Customer-facing applications are just one example. By extending these processes to the cloud, you're able to keep up with competitive changes without waiting for your business to fall behind.

8. Acceleration

Developing and deploying new applications quickly is important for companies that want to innovate and differentiate themselves. Microsoft Azure can dramatically reduce your time-to-market for new services and help integrate data from legacy, on-premise systems. Cloud applications allow companies to deploy directly to the cloud and make iterative updates as they go, constantly improving their service.

As a result, businesses are becoming more agile. They provide solutions to their customers at a faster rate and with increased quality, increasing their competitive edge.

9. Efficiency

Physical servers are costly, and businesses often find themselves paying for capabilities they don't use. But, by extending business to the cloud, you can reduce infrastructure costs and improve your company's profitability by adopting a [licence-based model](#).

Companies that use Azure can reduce costs by up to [72 percent](#) by paying for what they use, and only what they use. In addition to this, maintaining and updating servers becomes obsolete, drastically reducing IT costs.

10. Reliability

[90 percent](#) of companies have experienced unexpected downtime. This can be expensive – cutting productivity, threatening critical services and affecting customers.

Extending your business to the cloud, then, lets you take advantage of built-in technology to improve resilience, uptime and disaster recovery, making them more reliable than legacy capabilities. The result is less downtime and higher productivity.

This not only ensures your employees have the right tools to get the job done, but also reduces your chances of experiencing IT downtime, meaning no matter what, your employees can crack on, and fast.

The best of both worlds

Traditional data integration still has its value in the workplace, and physical servers will continue to live on. However, modern working practices are calling for an increased use of collaborative, transparent cloud technologies.

By investing in cloud technology, your business can benefit from cost reductions, business agility and faster acceleration-to-market without needing to be entirely cloud-ready.

‘Line-of-business leaders everywhere are using applications from the cloud and paying for them like they would a magazine subscription,’ explains [Daryl Plummer](#), VP at Gartner. ‘When the service is no longer required, they can cancel that subscription with no equipment left unused in the corner.’

About SolidSoft Reply

Solidsoft Reply is the Reply group company creating enterprise strength solutions on-premises and utilising the Microsoft Azure cloud platform. A global award winning Microsoft Gold certified partner, Solidsoft Reply specialises in: System Integration on the Microsoft platform, including BizTalk Server and Logic-Apps, Service-Bus and API-Management on Microsoft’s Azure PaaS public cloud; Custom Application Development on the Microsoft Azure platform; Business critical application support; Azure operational services and Application Lifecycle Management. A published thought leader and trusted advisor to Microsoft, engineering innovative solutions since 1993, Solidsoft Reply has helped over 500 enterprise clients succeed. www.solidsoftreply.com Contact us at: info.solidsoft@reply.com

Reply

Reply specialises in the design and implementation of solutions based on new communication channels and digital media. Through its network of specialist companies, Reply supports some of Europe’s leading industrial groups in Telco & Media, Industry & Services, Banks & Insurance, and Public Administration to define and develop business models, suited to the new paradigms of Big Data, Cloud Computing, Digital Media and the Internet of Things. Reply services include: Consulting, System Integration and Digital Services. www.reply.com