



Strength, Speed and Savings: Harnessing the Power of the Multi-cloud

Why small and medium businesses should reap the rewards now.



Imagine being able to offer employees everything they need to do their jobs, no matter what, all the time – whether they’re on site, in the field, working from home or travelling to meet clients. That includes consistent, secure access to all the data, apps and services that make productivity not just a possibility but a foregone conclusion.

Imagine some kind of major disruption – a cybersecurity issue, a natural disaster – to your on-premises data centre. But fortuitously, your operations can continue unabated even as you invest time and effort in getting your data centre back online.

Imagine being able to rapidly prototype new solutions and reduce time to market – a life-or-death benefit to a small and medium business (SMB) in a close race with its nearest and savviest competitors.

These are just three of the key benefits that are increasingly driving SMBs to turn to cloud-based IT solutions. In fact, in a recent two-year span, more than half (53 per cent) of SMBs “[spent more than \\$1.2M](#)” annually on the cloud, a 15 per cent increase. They’re clearly seeing the writing on the wall: when it comes to IT infrastructure, the cloud is king. In a highly dynamic business landscape, it’s the kind of solution that keeps businesses running, improves efficiency, provides resiliency and redundancy, and underpins a competitive edge.

That said, with respect to choosing a cloud solution, there’s one clear winner: the multi-cloud. It’s a ‘best of both worlds’ approach, a blend of on-prem data centres (owned by businesses) and public cloud solutions (designed and maintained by third parties, like Amazon and Microsoft). Embracing it has empowered SMBs across sectors and verticals to derive major benefits in scalability, flexibility and disaster recovery – all for a reasonable investment.

In the pages that follow, we explore the main benefits of the multi-cloud, the barriers that may prevent some from embracing it and ways to make progress on your cloud journey soon. The alternative may be too late.

Why Multi-cloud? And Why Now?



At its core, a multi-cloud solution maintains interoperability and interconnection between a public cloud like Microsoft Azure and an on-premises environment in order to:

- Enable seamless device management
- Facilitate resilience and business continuity
- Deliver apps, setting changes and new features
- Provide good governance and optimise the IT environment for efficiency
- Maintain and manage security compliance
- Control costs

Moving part or all of one's IT infrastructure to the cloud was once considered a potential option, but today, it's regarded as table stakes, something that's just part and parcel of any company's IT landscape.

But why right now? The business environment is increasingly fluid, shaped not just by competitors and the market but influenced by geopolitical, economic and social forces. Correctly configured and customised, the multi-cloud enables a remarkable level of flexibility that, in turn, underpins tremendous agility that's needed for these dynamic conditions – whether it's the ability to support changing business requirements, meet shifting customer and supplier expectations, respond decisively to and even counter competitive pressures, and/or integrate automated systems as they emerge.

SMBs embracing the cloud see clear and compelling benefits in doing so. Here's why they're making the leap:

- 48% reduce IT costs
- 46% turbocharge agility
- 40% improve business processes

Others are further accelerating their cloud adoption efforts to achieve:

- 50% more cost savings
- 46% improved productivity
- 37% flexible scalability

The SMBs who will win with cloud adoption are those who use it to couple strategy with execution. They view and wield the cloud less as a mere technology asset and more as a management tool, one that allows them to drive secure collaboration, automation, insights and productivity.

Five Compelling Benefits of the Multi-cloud



SCALABILITY AND SAVINGS

A public cloud brings the unprecedented ability to scale up or down as business needs demand. In this model, a company doesn't have to outlay capital expense. Instead, it pays only for what's consumed, making this a highly budget-friendly option that eliminates wasting money on idle infrastructure.



PERFORMANCE AND PRIVACY

If the public cloud empowers SMBs to scale quickly, the private cloud component offers businesses complete control, which can support greater speed and performance, depending on its design and configuration. It also enables greater privacy – if there is highly sensitive data, a private cloud is a good option (if managed smartly by IT).



RESILIENCE AND REDUNDANCY

A multi-cloud keeps strong business continuity front and centre for an SMB. If a company's on-prem server goes down, its counterpart in the public cloud keeps operations strong, functional and stable.



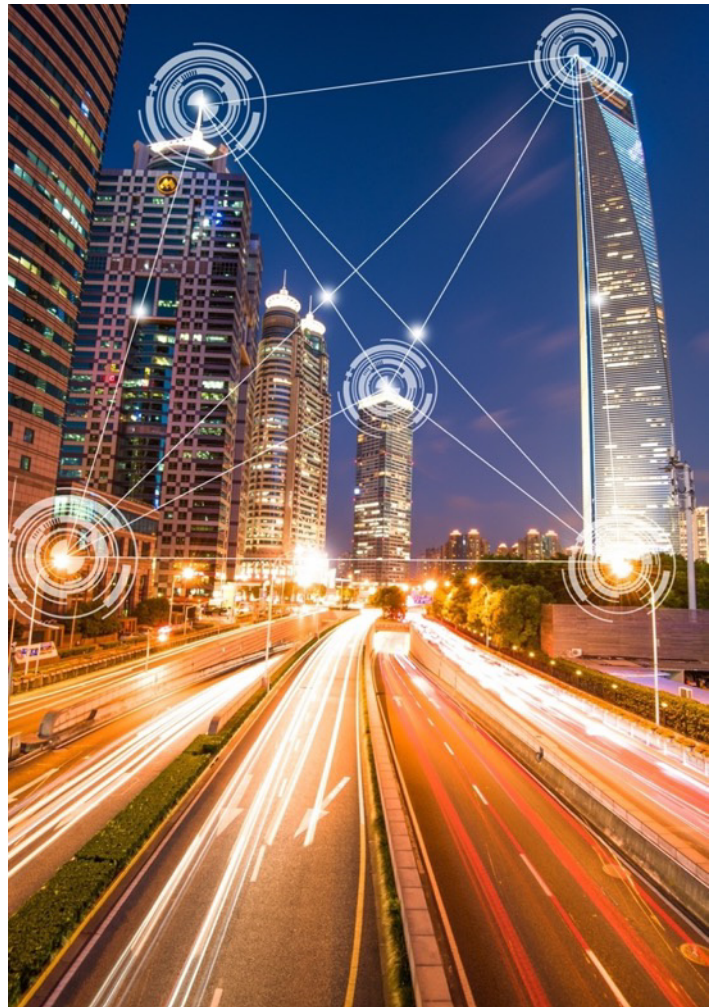
EXPERIMENTATION AND INNOVATION

Small and medium businesses often benefit from the ability to rapidly develop and prototype new products and services. A public cloud component delivers exactly that – and for SMBs, the appeal is in facilitating agile development cycles that accelerate time-to-market.



DATA AND APPLICATION PORTABILITY

Flexibility is key – and multi-cloud delivers in the form of data and application portability. It becomes very simple to move data to and from different cloud service providers, ensuring both cost-effectiveness and resiliency.



What's Holding Some SMBs Back?

Although it's true SMBs are increasingly embracing the cloud in general, it doesn't mean it's without reservation or that they've all reached the same level of full adoption.

What can hold an SMB back from fully embracing the obvious and attractive benefits of a multi-cloud solution?

THE CHALLENGE OF GOVERNANCE

With any business, the generation of data is unimaginably prolific. Often, SMBs seize upon the cloud as the saviour – once a migration is completed, all will be well. No more problems, no more issues. The cloud indeed offers substantial and much-needed benefits. But too often, SMBs lack mature IT governance practices to keep their instances secure, organised and operating at maximum efficiency.

Think of it as moving from a small apartment to a larger home. Having more space and amenities can seem like the answer to all organisational challenges but, too often, clutter in one place ends up simply being clutter in the next. If you're shifting from on-premises to multi-cloud, governance matters. According to the [Association for Intelligent Information Management](#), this includes:

- Information entry points, meaning how organisations capture and subsequently organise data flowing into their pipelines
- Information endpoints, such as “computers, smartphones and IoT devices”
- Policy administration, which involves ongoing compliance and risk management

MANAGING THE MULTI-CLOUD SEEMS OVERWHELMING

Overseeing multiple environments – and doing it well – involves an investment of time, effort, expertise and budget. Not every SMB has all four of these components at their collective fingertips, nor can they often pause long enough to bring those elements to bear. Simultaneously, the requirements to monitor, patch, ensure resilience, keep things operational, onboard new devices, deploy fresh updates to software, maintain a good security posture and more are never-ending.

SECURITY IS TOP OF MIND – AND CONTROL IS DIFFICULT TO RELINQUISH

Some SMBs see the appeal of multi-cloud but can't overcome innate resistance around security. After all, on-premises is widely acknowledged to be more secure than a public cloud. Yet, there are ways to manage this concern in order to reap the benefits of including a public cloud component in their IT environment. This may include ensuring security controls are present and able to be managed by the SMB directly or as well as setting up on-premises with regular cloud backups.

ADOPTION AND ACCELERATION MADE SIMPLER

If SMBs are moving slower than desired to fully embrace and manage a multi-cloud environment – or perhaps have not yet even started – there are alternatives that can support substantial forward momentum.

A qualified partner can ease the way by first exploring client business objectives, pain points, budget and technical requirements. The right expert will make it possible to:

- **Offload the areas of most concern**, such as managing devices through services like Microsoft Intune, supporting security compliance, maintaining instances to achieve redundancy and strengthen resilience, and ensuring a good (and constant) security posture.
- **Understand what public cloud platform best suits** your particular needs – and marry it with a correctly configured, on-premises solution.
- **Develop a robust multi-cloud architecture design** and then craft a migration strategy that is defensible and achievable – after a close evaluation of existing infrastructure and applications.
- **Ensure adherence with industry best practices in both cloud security and regulatory compliance**, including identity management, encryption and compliance controls, and working with reputable cybersecurity providers.
- **Implement effective governance models** while also designing cloud cost optimisation strategies and rigorously embedding cost-control mechanisms (such as consumption-based models).

Migrating to the multi-cloud relies on expertise, communication and a clear value proposition – SMBs should closely evaluate partners based on these three dimensions to find the right partner for their specific needs.

How We Can Help

While SMBs may share common challenges and opportunities, an expert cloud migration and managed service provider understands that customisation is critical to achieving unique goals and seizing advantages, while avoiding pitfalls along the way.



Xerox® IT Services offers responsive, scalable solutions that can expand or contract to fit and flex with an SMB's evolving circumstances and requirements. We routinely help our clients strengthen their cloud presence through public, private and multi-cloud infrastructure options and architecture. More critically, we remove the burden of overseeing cloud environments through a managed service option that supports cost optimisation, governance and orchestration.

OUR CLOUD EXPERTISE AND OFFERINGS INCLUDE:

- Migrating compute and storage workloads to the cloud
- Migration to cloud-based productivity and collaboration tools
- Cloud security
- Cloud-based identity and access management
- Virtualisation
- Private cloud OpEx model (Greenlake)
- Mobile device management (mobile productivity)
- Data backups and replication
- On-premises server and storage solutions



AVAILABLE TO YOU ANY TIME

Experts at Xerox can develop multi-cloud solutions that are fully owned and managed by our clients – or managed directly by us. Whether you're at the start of your cloud journey or far down the path, we're here to listen, assess and advise. Get in touch today: [FILL IN](#).

"Xerox supports one of the broadest ranges of mobile and digital workflows, backed by its 20 years of experience hosting cloud services on a global scale." – IDC

Learn more about [Multi-cloud Solutions by Xerox](#).