



CLOUD AND AUTOMATION FOR SMBS:

Simple strategies for success



Know what's good for you

We've all heard about the benefits of cloud technologies and automation, but should the estimated 7.6 million¹ small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) in the USA with up to 1,000 employees even be considering it?

The truth is that even the smallest businesses can get value from the cloud, to help them:

- **Bridge skills gaps:** Cloud can make light work of email or sales contact management. No IT expertise is needed and you can access expert support on tap.
- **Improve service quality:** Application stability and uptime SLAs are all taken care of by the provider.
- **Increase security:** These days, cloud solutions are often more secure than traditional data centers. They also help you keep malware and cyber attacks out of your network.
- **Drive cost efficiency:** There's little to no capital outlay; just predictable monthly operating costs. You can also scale on demand, and pay only for what you use.



The numbers are seriously positive

Here's what cloud technology adopters had to say about the benefits of cloud¹:



Have reduced time spent managing IT



Have more time to pursue new opportunities



Now use fewer internal IT resources



Can reinvest money saved by moving to the cloud



Are experiencing security benefits



Have improved customer service since moving to the cloud



Have improved service availability

Which cloud services matter most to SMBs?

The US SMB cloud market had exploded to **\$24B** by the end of 2013².

So what exactly have you—and your peers been investing in?

- **\$8.4B on Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS):** Includes everything from dedicated servers to cloud servers, virtual private servers (VPS), managed hosting and add-on applications and services for hosted infrastructures.
- **\$7.1B on Software-as-a-Service (SaaS):** Spans web-based business applications like file sharing, online accounting, travel and expense management, online backup and storage, online CRM, payroll and HR, support and help desk and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI).
- **\$4.8B on Unified Communications (UC):** Embraces business-class email and email security services, email archiving and mobility and hosted phone services—including hosted PBX. Communication and collaboration applications such as web and phone conferencing, instant collaboration, and Mobile Device Management (MDM) are also included here.
- **\$3.6B on third party web presence and web applications:** Incorporates hosting, domain registration, SSL and eCommerce add-ons to web server backup, content delivery and management, SEO, web server security and health monitoring.

Should I automate in the cloud?

New cloud models offer new and effective ways to automate business processes. Business Process Automation (BPA), to give it its proper name, can save time and money by eliminating repetitive manual tasks and processes, letting you concentrate on what matters most, like growing your business.

For instance, a recent CompTIA study found that, while over 70% of large businesses have automated invoicing and expense reporting, less than half of SMBs have. And let's face it, everyone hates expenses!

But it's not just expenses management that you can cut down to size. You can automate pretty much any business function in the cloud, including:

- Project management
- Employee performance evaluation
- Enterprise resource planning
- Document and content management
- Marketing and social media
- Sales and invoicing processes
- Purchasing processes
- Expense report management

3 keys to successful automation in the cloud

1

Think about the jobs your employees have to perform regularly. **Where are you wasting time?** And would the time spent automating that process be less than the time you spend doing it yourself over, say, a year? Remember to take into account the time your employees spend fixing errors in manual processes too.

2

Once you've built a list, consider the **expertise and capabilities of solution providers**. There are specialist providers for all kinds of automated services, and most of these are available in the cloud.

3

Finally, **choose a solution that is easily accessible for everyone**. The beauty of cloud-based services is that everyone can usually access them via the web and there is little need for integration work.



Mobility is key

Smartphones and tablets have become the device of choice for today's workers, helping them keep track of everything from restaurant expenses—to customer contact information, project plans, schedules and much more. In fact, 91% of SMBs now use mobile solutions to help support their business³.

More and more SMBs are going mobile.

- Mobile management solution adoption rose by 15% over 2012.
- Mobile collaboration and business apps deployment has risen roughly 20% since 2012.
- Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies doubled in 2012-2013 to 62%.

So when you're weighing cloud-based automation services, it's vital to choose a provider with an integrated mobile offering—one that lets your employees work more effectively from wherever they are—backed by an ecosystem of partners offering third-party apps and support services.

What to look for in a cloud partner

The cloud can mean anything from a remote data center to a hosted third-party service. Whichever model you're considering, you need a flexible platform for service delivery—one that can automate repetitive tasks, keep data current to drive up visibility and reporting and keep costs to a minimum.

When you're choosing a partner, make sure you can tick all these boxes:

- Minimal capital expenditure and set-up fees**
- Easy platform to configure and maintain**
- Strong integration with existing systems**
- Automatic updates and upgrades**
- An ecosystem of mobility partners**

Then you'll be well on your way to becoming a more productive, secure, and cost-effective business



Why go with Concur?

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¹ '2014 4 Surprising Facts About SMB Cloud Adoption', Tom Bressie (<http://venturebeat.com/2014/12/04/4-surprising-facts-about-smb-cloud-adoption-infographic/>)

² '2014 Parallels SMB Cloud Insights™, United States' (www.odin.com/fileadmin/parallels/documents/smb-reports/2014/SP-smb-book-united-states-2014-0224.pdf), © Parallels IP Holdings GmbH.

³ '2013 Small and Medium Businesses Mobile Solutions Study' (www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/2630810/2013_small_and_medium_businesses_mobile_solutions.pdf), SMB Group Inc.

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