BUSINESS insights

The Cloud is Ready for Prime Time.
Is Your Business Ready?

Many organizations think of cloud computing as a new idea, and they may be waiting for the technology to mature before trusting their critical enterprise systems to an online, hosted environment. But technologies such as Constant Contact® have existed for over a decade operating in the cloud. In fact, the term "cloud" dates back to the 1990s, as telecommunications firms began to offer Virtual Private Networks (VPN) to provide data services at low cost[1]. Cloud environments are almost as old as the Internet itself, and the concept is in fact a very well-proven idea.

Whether it's a retail application such as Apple's iTunes, or a business-to-business application such as Salesforce.com, companies everywhere are either rolling out their own solutions on the cloud, or using the cloud to reinvent their internal technology infrastructure. Cloud computing is a model where software applications are hosted by the provider and offered through a service-based model. How this is relevant to your business is that you can now access all of the functionality of corporate servers without paying for the installation and maintenance of the hardware onsite. And you do not need to staff internal IT resources in order to keep things running smoothly. Email and all other business critical applications can be hosted securely at a remote location, and you simply pay a monthly fee.

Through the cloud, you can access:

- Enterprise directory management
- Enterprise portal
- Text-to-speech applications to have email read over the phone
- Web-based fax
- Fully integrated data and voice on one platform, hosted offsite for business continuity assurance
- Full smart phone support to integrate Gmail™ and contacts, and to enable corporate network access from a mobile device
- Access to the corporate phone network anywhere there is access to a web browser

Presence Management through the cloud

Through the cloud, you can access the full breadth and depth of everything that Presence Management has to offer. You can integrate multiple communications mediums into a single interface, such as a wireline phone, smart phone, PC, or laptop. You can break down the barriers between disparate communications technologies, and your team gains the ability to communicate using any device at their disposal in real time with another person, regardless of what device is being used at the other end. Imagine an employee on the road using a cell phone to contact another staff member who is in a meeting and only has access their laptop. Communication is instant, without hiccups or delays, enabling on-demand information flow and

IDeACOM NETWORK ®

102 Timbertrace Ct.
Columbia, SC 29212
1-866-IDEACOM (433-2266)
www.ideacom.org

BUSINESS insights

increasing the mobility and dynamic efficiency of your whole organizational culture. Through Presence Management on the cloud, you can pull up a contact right through a web browser and click to take your phone off-hook and dial. By moving to the cloud you are making real gains in productivity, as well as cutting operational costs.

How to make a painless move to the cloud

One thing to look for from your phone system vendor is interoperability with the cloud. Many phone systems do not integrate directly with cloud environments. That means you have to separate your voice and data networks, moving data to the cloud while your voice network becomes a separate system. In this approach, a business is missing out on the core productivity improvements of the cloud and the cost savings of having all components under one integrated umbrella.

Selecting a vendor that can integrate seamlessly with the cloud is an absolutely essential component of any successful cloud deployment. The vendor must be able to integrate their PBX product directly to the cloud environment you select. This should always be the first question you ask of any phone vendor that you are considering. It's the only way to get everything into the cloud, and to realize the true operational and bottom-line enhancements that you deserve.

[1] "Cloud Computing" Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing

**IDeACOM®
NETWORK**

102 Timbertrace Ct.
Columbia, SC 29212
1-866-IDEACOM (433-2266)
www.ideacom.org