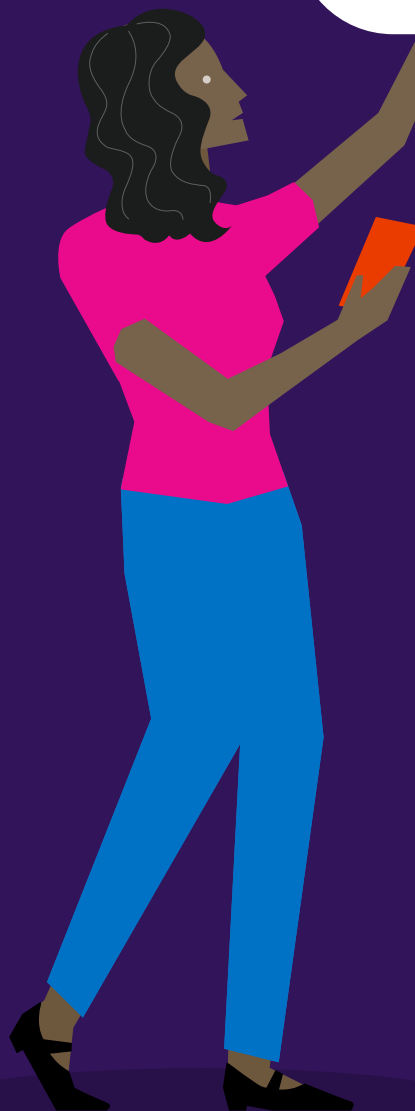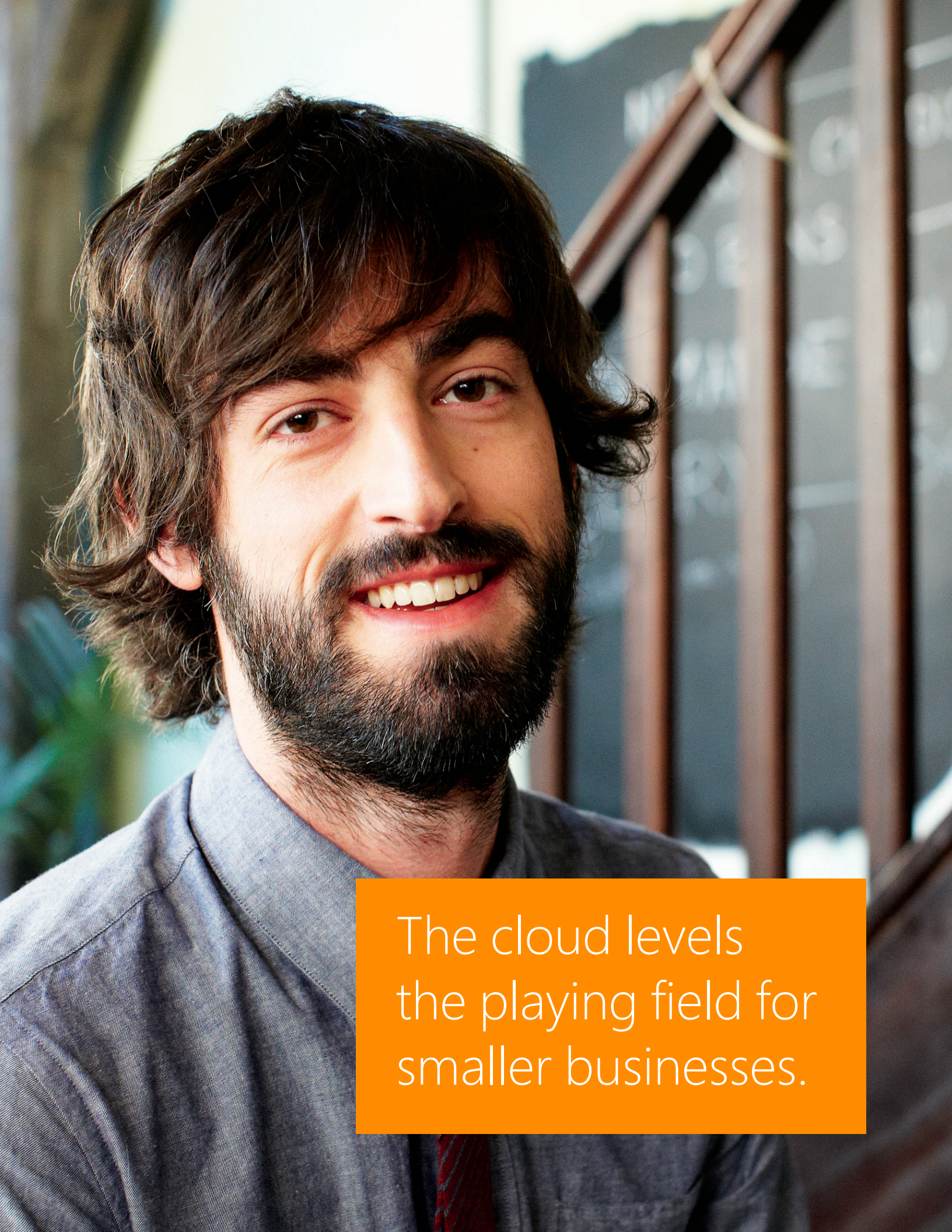# The Cloud for Productivity and Mobility

A Guide for Small and Midsize Business

As mobile work becomes the norm, turn to cloud-based solutions to extend productivity, collaboration, and business management tools to employees on the go.

Microsoft

Better Business Through Cloud Mobile Productivity

Mobile means business. During the past decade, mobile devices have become ubiquitous in our lives, performing a range of activities that were formerly limited to desktop and laptop computers. Now, mobility is an essential tool for startups and smaller businesses to empower workers and connect with customers.
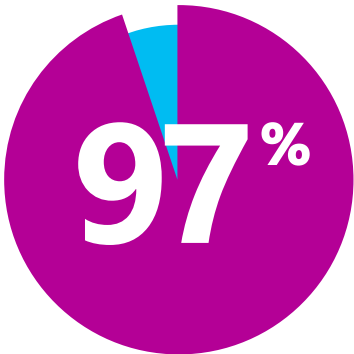
As mobile computing becomes the expected standard for work and life worldwide, the cloud offers a way to extend productivity, security, and access to information to mobile workers (plus partners and customers) working anywhere, anytime, on any device. The cloud levels the playing field, giving small to midsize businesses access to the technology that enables people to do more with scarce time and resources.

Mobile productivity? Bring it! Businesses are taking advantage of this trend by letting employees work from anywhere or "bring your own device" (BYOD) as ways to accommodate different work styles and save costs. Enabling people to work the way they want is a great motivator, and can help businesses attract and retain the talent they need. And by taking advantage of the security and management capabilities through the cloud, BYOD does not need to mean compromising on the quality of your business capabilities or security.
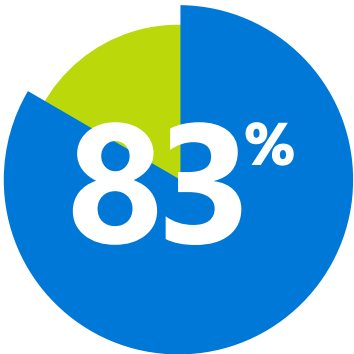
The cloud levels the playing field for smaller businesses.

According to a March 2014 study of 300 SMB IT pros by Dimensional Research:

75%

Have employees that use tablets for work.

97%

Say anytime, anywhere access to data and applications makes employees more effective.

83%

Say mobilizing business data and applications would have a high or medium business impact.

What Cloud Productivity Means for Your Business

Cloud computing is a technological innovation, but how does it connect to the real needs and pains of businesses?

Do business anywhere, anytime. Business doesn't start at 9:00 A.M. and end at 5:00 P.M. anymore. Even if it did, odds are you have customers or suppliers in other time zones or people that need to be on the go. Cloud productivity, collaboration, and business management tools keep your people informed and connected so they can approve orders, service customers, and stay on top of tasks virtually anywhere they need to work.

Simplicity in diversity. As businesses begin to embrace bring your own device (BYOD) to relieve tracking and maintaining aging company-owned workstation and laptop computers, it comes with a downside. When every employee is using a different device, the business is challenged to

ensure security, manageability, and consistency for work-related data and software. By providing productivity tools and secure, shared storage through the cloud, you can ensure everyone is on the same page when it comes to work, even if they're using different devices. Your team will become more productive and satisfied with their jobs, and your business will gain higher-quality work as a result.

Use the tools you know. Do your people prefer Windows devices, iOS, or Android? Cloud-based and mobile versions of popular business software suites are available now across all mobile platforms. Enable your staff to use the skills and practices they already know to create content and analyze data.

The Mobile Productivity Toolbox

What do today's workers need to be productive on the go? Here's a rundown.

Remote access to business applications: Conduct business on the go with secure access to your financial (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) solutions.

Data analysis tools: Secure mobile access to business systems for customer relationship management, financial analysis, and other role-based functions.
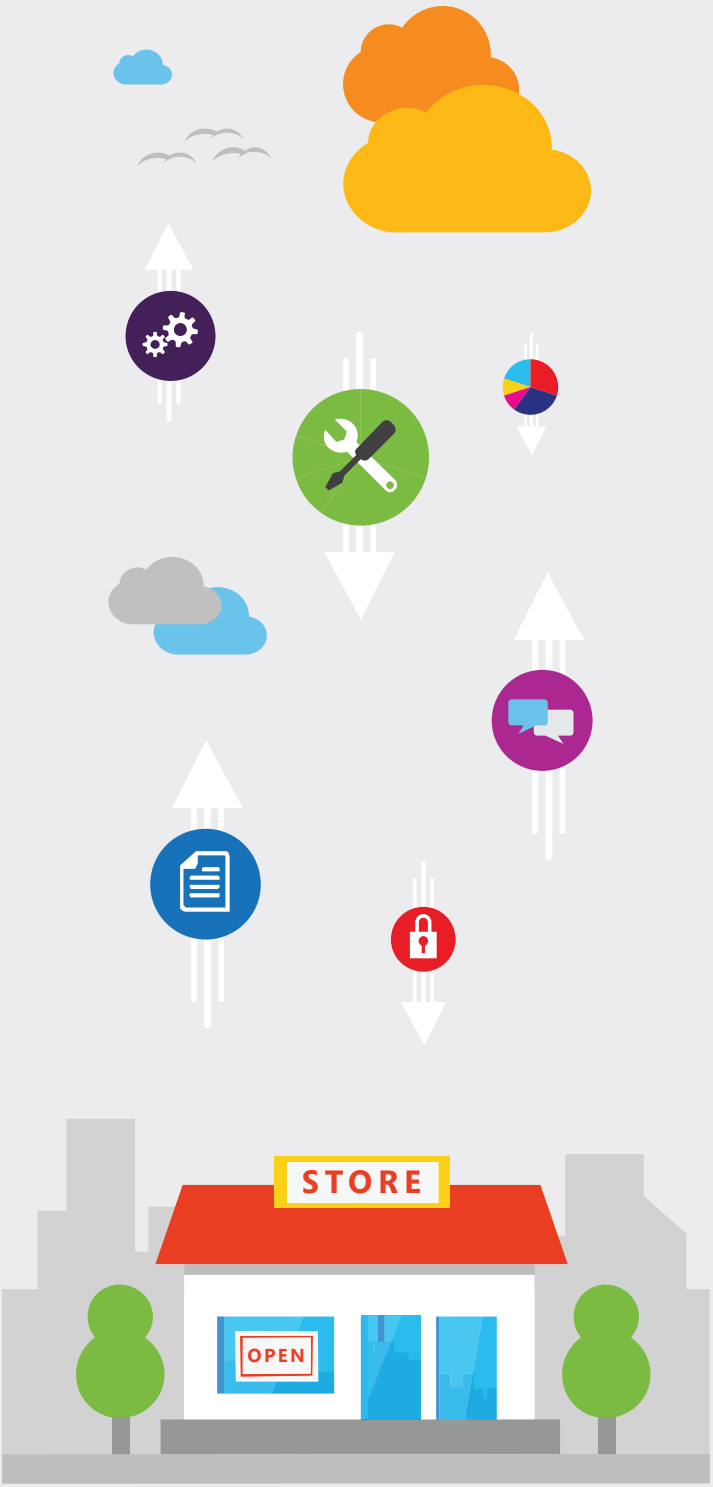
Business class communication and collaboration: Secure access to business email, calendar, real-time communication (voice, text/media chat, online meetings), shared workspaces, and internal sites.

Content creation applications: Familiar, standard tools for creating documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and other building blocks of business communication.

Storage and synchronization: Enterprise-grade cloud storage that keeps information accessible and synchronized across devices.

When evaluating cloud-based business application and productivity tools for mobile users, look for solutions that are *comprehensive, familiar, and enterprise grade.* Piecemeal or consumer-oriented tools may offer compelling features, but their greater risk and complexity can lead to hidden costs.

STORE

OPEN

Mobilize the Productivity of Your Business

The cloud is on the move. Your customers and employees are mobile. Your business applications and productivity solutions should be too. Connect your people, processes, and devices through the cloud.

DEPT. STORE

GEEK

Cloud Productivity
Extend access to business applications and productivity tools on the device you people prefer.
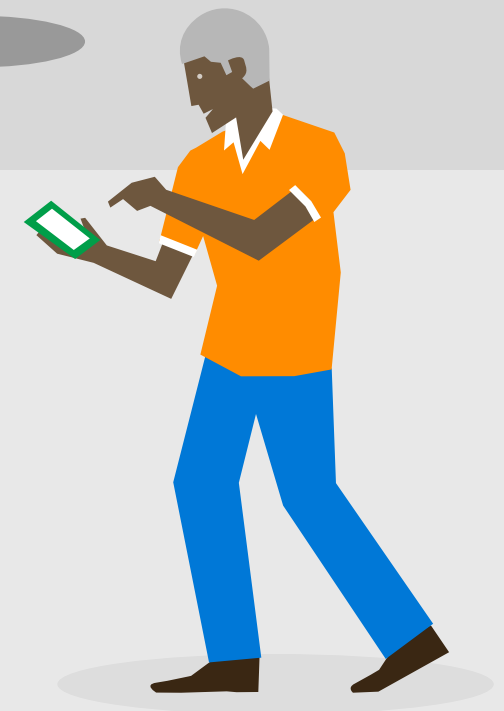
Cloud Coordination
Keep everyone on the same page by synchronizing data and devices through the cloud.
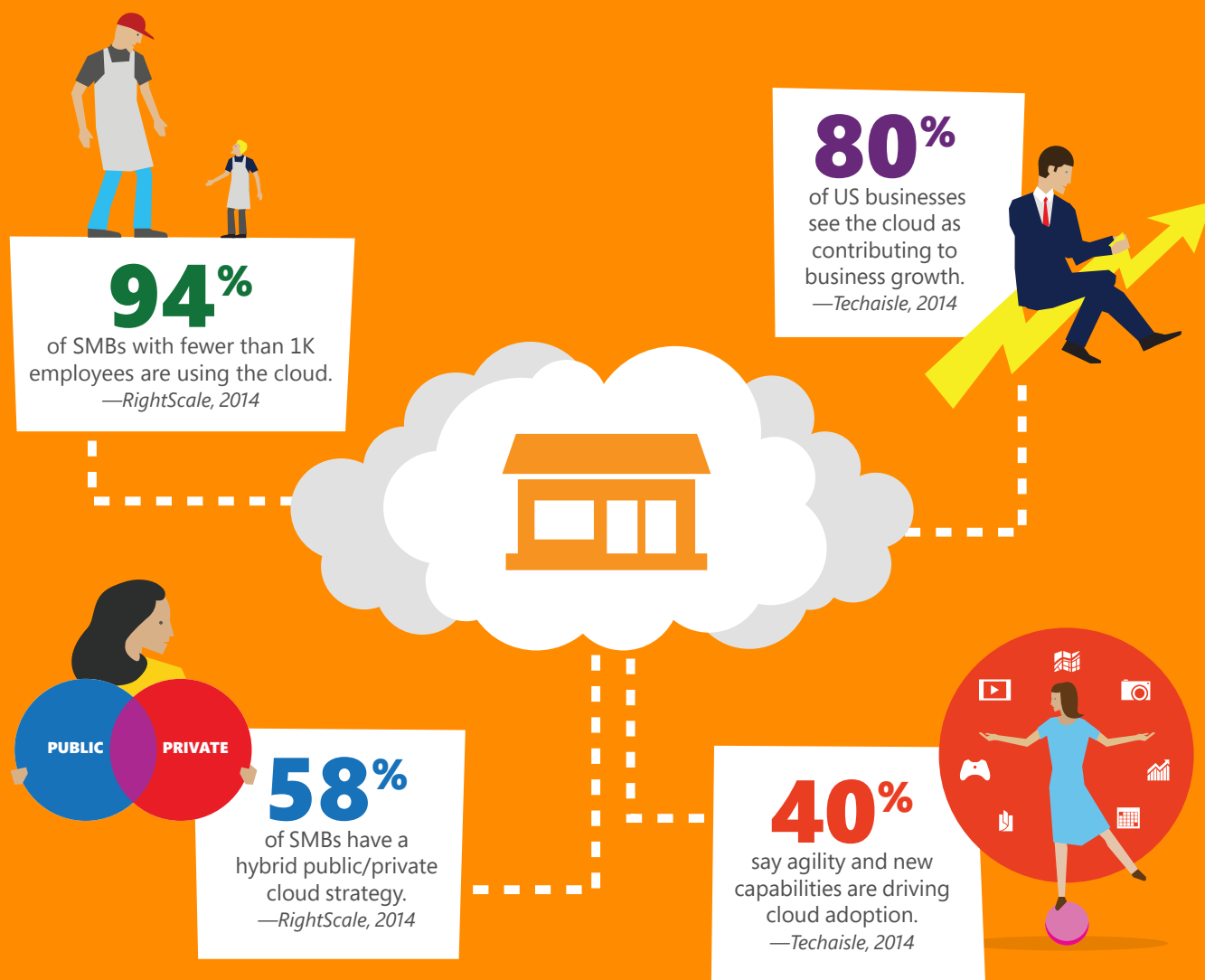
Cloud Confidence
Keep your business data safe in the cloud while making sure everyone has the access they need.

Cloud Ubiquity
Use the cloud to tap into new mobile data sources and target apps to any device.

80%
of US businesses
see the cloud as
contributing to
business growth.
—Techaisle, 2014

94%
of SMBs with fewer than 1K
employees are using the cloud.
—RightScale, 2014

PUBLIC   PRIVATE

58%
of SMBs have a
hybrid public/private
cloud strategy.
—RightScale, 2014

40%
say agility and new
capabilities are driving
cloud adoption.
—Techaisle, 2014

SMBs Unleash Productivity Through the Cloud

Why are businesses turning to the cloud? According to industry research from global SMB technology specialists Techaisle, it's opportunity, not just efficiency, that's behind the move. Sure, businesses of all sizes see value in the cloud pricing model that lets you pay as you go for the volume of service you use. But more than 80 percent of SMBs in the United States see productivity as the main benefit.

For smaller businesses of 1–50 employees, productivity through the cloud means giving team members the high-end business tools they need to compete and win. For businesses of 50–250 employees, the main driver is IT productivity: freeing tech-oriented staff from the chores of maintaining software on devices, and empowering them to do more for the business.

Mobilize Your Business: Connect to Customers Through the Cloud

What new and emerging capabilities can businesses unlock on their journey to the cloud?

As more people turn to mobile devices as their first (or only) way to access data and information, your business needs to think about ways to make your online presence mobile-friendly. The cloud is the ideal platform for mobile development, whether for business, entertainment, or marketing.

Win their hearts and their minds. You don't have to be a mind reader to get into your customers' heads. You just need the right tools to show you what they want and when they want it. It's about creating a complete view of each customer's history compared with other similar customers to make recommendations for what they may want or need next.

Mobile first, cloud first. Creating a website or social media presence is not the only way to reach customers. More and more businesses today are tapping into the mobile market with apps that offer content, convenience, location-based features, and more. The cloud enables you to develop and deploy those apps faster, and scale them up to meet higher levels of demand instantly, without the need for new equipment.

Heavy lifting, light footprint. Thinking about more ambitious mobile tools? The cloud is ideal for custom business and data applications because massively scaled cloud infrastructure can handle the load that crunching numbers or displaying rich images requires without taxing the relatively light capabilities of the mobile device. This makes it easier for your IT staff or partner to expose business data and analysis tools as a service in secure mobile apps.

Vision for an Agile Business

What processes and outcomes can businesses achieve through the cloud?

Extending business management, data, and productivity tools to mobile users through the cloud can make it easier for people to contribute, improve the overall work experience, and drive value across the entire organization.

Simplify and kick-start your day. When your business applications, calendar, email, data, and collaboration tools all come together with one familiar user experience from one trusted vendor, adoption goes up, training costs go down, and your people can achieve more.

Use work flexibility to compete for talent. Smaller businesses face bigger challenges in recruiting top talent; therefore you need every advantage to attract and retain the best people to help you grow. By embracing the cloud for mobile productivity, you can offer a more flexible work experience that lets people balance work and life.

Enable choice without compromise. Motivate your people by encouraging them to use the device they prefer, but keep the experience consistent and your data secure through the cloud. This lets you say yes to BYOD but no to the risk and complexity of supporting so much different equipment.

Reduce data risk. If someone on your team loses a smartphone or tablet that has business data on it, are you sure you can get it back? When you plan for mobile productivity, you can take steps to centralize business information in cloud-based storage while making it available more securely through an app. You can also make it far easier to restore that data once a replacement device connects to it.

WASH Multifamily Laundry cleans up with smart, connected mobile business solutions

WASH Multifamily Laundry, founded in 1947 and based in California, maintains half a million washers and dryers in 75,000 locations throughout North America.

Using Microsoft Dynamics and Office 365, machines, parts inventory, active service calls, collections and all other daily operations are fed into one system, providing better real-time visibility to everyone in the company.

Once relying on hand-written history cards that were frequently destroyed or lost, the transition online is a welcome change. Having information securely available through the cloud has made a big impact on the technicians' daily work lives.

Real-time data anywhere, anytime. Every machine is tracked from the time it shows up in the warehouse throughout its service lifetime. Using scanners, bar codes, smartphones, and other devices, WASH employees can access the real-time data for efficient service.

Efficient routing saves time and money. All 400 service vehicles in the WASH fleet have GPS tracking, which has dramatically driven down fuel costs, thanks to better routing—to ensure the closest tech gets to a given location first.

Better tools, better results. Techs can take pictures of damaged machines, add details, and forward the information to the loss department. In most cases that helps them document and pinpoint the problem to fix it once and be done.

"It's made our company much more efficient," said Tommy Gates, WASH's vice president of operations. "We can quickly get a report card based on machine inventory and open installation work orders."

Learn more about how WASH gained real-time visibility into all of its locations with cloud-based solutions from Microsoft.

Considerations: To best realize these benefits for your business, ask the following questions

How much are your aging computers costing you?

Among small businesses, the average cost to repair a four-year-old PC is $531 per year, according to Techaisle's 2014 Small Business PC Cost Study. Consider migrating to cloud-based productivity solutions as you refresh older PCs with new multifunction tablets and mobile devices.

How easy is it to manage mobile device apps and security?

Users need to access apps on their devices, but those apps and devices need to be managed and kept up-to-date. Does your solution provide a way for users to self-install approved apps and remotely lock and/or wipe corporate data from devices that get lost or compromised?

Are your employees giving away valuable business information without realizing it?

Some free, cloud-based productivity tools and consumer applications make money by tracking how it gets used or by advertising to anyone who installs one. "Free" services often come with other information security risks, too. Evaluate all the hidden costs as you look at the value of a straightforward license agreement.

Can your people securely and simply access corporate data on personal devices?

It's likely that business users have two or more devices to do their work. Does your mobile business solution make it easy for them to sync data from work folders to authorized devices? Do you have a way to manage content security on files, even outside the firewall? Can they log on securely without multiple passwords and credentials?

Key Takeaways

- For startups and growing businesses interested in offering business applications and productivity tools for mobile and remote users, the cloud offers better economics, convenience, capabilities, and security.

- As businesses develop ways to extend access to data and content to consumers, partners, and employees, think mobile first, cloud first.

- When considering cloud-based business applications and productivity solutions for mobile workers, look for business-class performance: comprehensive capabilities, familiar and consistent user experience, business-class security, and a trustworthy cloud provider.

Take the Next Steps

Business solutions from Microsoft are sold, implemented and supported by a global network of solution consultants called partners. As a Microsoft partner, we are here to recommend a solution that best fits your needs. Contact us to learn more about our solutions for small and midsized businesses and to schedule a personalized demonstration.

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<Microsoft partner contact info>
<First name, Last name>

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