PICKING THE RIGHT HOSTING PROVIDER FOR SUCCESS

Executive Summary

Gather CTOs and CIOs from top MNCs around the globe, and you will get a unanimous answer: companies that are not using the cloud are likely to go obsolete in a few years.

Cloud technology has rapidly changed the way businesses function. It has become a matter of 'when' rather than 'if' for businesses to move at least some of their operations to the cloud. They're showing great interest in leveraging this revolutionary technology and reaping its benefits. Some of the prominent benefits include remote access, cost savings, better collaboration, and the like. However, all these are only possible if you pick the right cloud hosting provider.

According to a 2016 press release from Gartner, by 2020, 'No Cloud' will be as rare as 'No Internet' in companies. [1]

This whitepaper will help you understand the benefits that you will get by selecting the cloud hosting provider that is suitable for your business, the things you should keep in mind while discussing your requirements, and much more.

Introduction to Cloud Hosting

Cloud computing has been a trending topic in the IT industry for almost a decade now. It can mean different things for different organizations - online data storage, web applications, file sharing, sending and storing emails, and the like. However, rather than deploying cloud solutions themselves, businesses can opt for third-party providers that offer cloud solutions.

Cloud hosting is the deployment of IT resources over the Internet by third-party providers. They create a virtual environment that can be configured according to the need - the resources can be added or subtracted at any time. Some cloud providers offer 99.999% uptime and provide smooth data migration.

McAfee suggests that 87% of businesses experience overall acceleration if they use cloud services. [2]
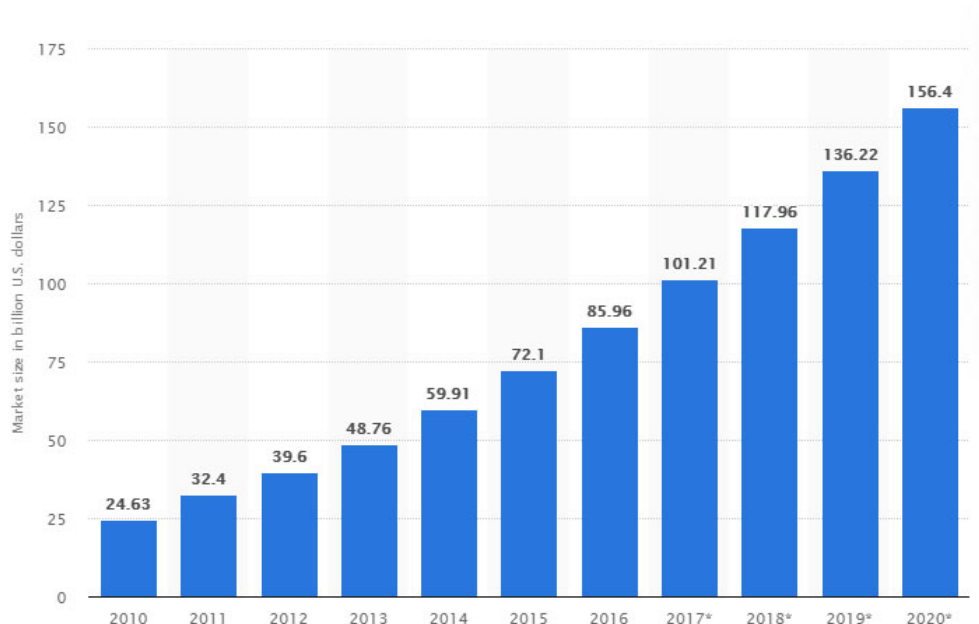
The global cloud hosting market is predicted to reach $76.2 billion by 2023.

Why Cloud Hosting?

In an in-house server, all the applications are deployed on physical servers. However, in cloud hosting, your data and applications are migrated onto a virtual server, which can be accessed from any part of the globe. Some significant offerings of cloud hosting are:

Immediacy

If you need to upgrade on your local system's configuration, it may take some time, hampering your business activities. But with cloud hosting, when you need to scale up or down, there is no need to wait. Contact the customer support of your cloud hosting provider and ask them to do the needful - you will get what you need in the blink of an eye.

Anytime Access

There's no need to be present in the office if you are assisting your clients during non-business hours. With cloud hosting, you can access your data anytime from the comfort of your home. This feature is one of the significant reasons why organizations choose cloud hosting in the first place.

Data Protection

With the company's increasing digital footprint, data protection and its security are of huge significance. By opting for cloud hosting, there are minimum chances of any security breach. You get enterprise-level data security with data encryption, latest firewalls and antivirus, and other security measures.

Savings

There are two costs associated with a solution - purchasing cost and total cost of ownership (TCO). Oftentimes, people end up purchasing a solution as its purchasing cost is almost equal to the amount they will pay to a vendor (if they lease it). However, when other costs associated with the solution like maintenance and hardware costs are calculated for its lifetime, the TCO comes out to be way more than the leasing amount.

By opting for cloud hosting, you eliminate both the purchasing cost and TCO as the hardware is owned and maintained by the provider.

Looking at the Cloud Hosting Provider Landscape

Every cloud hosting provider is unique in the services they offer and in their server and security management. This can have a direct impact on the customer experience and data security. Also, this makes selecting the right hosting provider tiresome and confusing.

The term 'cloud' can mean differently for different vendors and the services they offer. However, as a customer, you should keep in mind that when you select the hosting provider, your data should be readily accessible at all times and stored in a secure place.

According to IDC, an amount of $56.6 billion was spent on public cloud in 2014 globally. [3]

Types of Hosting Providers

1. Managed Cloud Hosting

These providers ease the customer's business processes by providing IT support and maintenance services. The platforms are based on the multi-tenant approach and offer customized solutions keeping data security and business continuity in mind.

2. Unmanaged Cloud Hosting

Unmanaged cloud hosting is also known as 'do it yourself' form of cloud hosting. The service provider offers the core cloud services, but the customer has to manage the server on its own. In simple words, the customers get access from the provider but have to maintain the tools and applications themselves.

Choosing each category comes with its pros and cons. For instance, some companies with budget constraints and a limited process can function with unmanaged solutions while others may choose managed cloud hosting for additional IT support.

How to Pick the Right Hosting Provider

There are so many hosting providers in the market that choosing 'the one' that will help you succeed is a challenging task. All of them may seem similar in terms of features, pricing, and other technical aspects. The right choice will always be a combination of your business experience, in-depth analysis of multiple factors, and the services of the provider.

Here are some criteria that'll help you assess service providers and finally choose the one.

1

Understand Your Needs

First things first, you need to understand your business needs and what you need to achieve. Your business experience will give a clear idea of the future and the type of services you need to get them fulfilled.

As a matter of fact, your business and cloud hosting solution should sync with each other well so that your employees feel that they did not need to learn anything extraordinarily new. Make a checklist of such points and evaluate every service provider based on it.

2

Identify The Areas That Can Be Outsourced

Every business is unique, and so are its IT requirements - every business vertical cannot be outsourced to the cloud.

It is essential to identify the areas or solutions which can be outsourced to the cloud. For instance, you can host the most widely used application by your employees to offer them the flexibility of remote working if you wish to create a remote working environment. Thus, choose a service provider that complements the field you want to outsource to the cloud.

Data Security

You need to understand the sensitivity of your data and the security it needs. There has to be zero negligence in ensuring that your data is safe and secure on the cloud. Also, you need to understand the technicalities of the security your potential cloud provider is offering (look at the security documentation of the provider and ensure that everything is mentioned in the Service Level Agreement).

A Service Level Agreement is a legal document that both parties agree upon before finalizing things. It includes parameters such as performance, uptime, data security, and more.

In addition, ask what security measures are offered within your subscription charges, and for what security features you'll need to pay more.

Data security is a serious concern in this digital age. Hence, you should know every detail of the security measures the cloud provider will offer - be specific and ask explicit questions as per your needs and industry. Also, please make sure that all the regulatory requirements are met.

Pricing Structure

Pricing plays an important role in choosing a cloud hosting provider. The main aim of cloud hosting is to bring down the IT expenses - stay away from hosting providers who ask for huge money as upfront charges. Such hosting providers are often not trustworthy and do not offer satisfactory services. As a result, it can directly impact your business.

In fact, you need to pay for what you use in cloud hosting - this model is called 'pay-as-you-go.' If you opt for extra services, your subscription fees will go up and vice-versa. Most providers charge their customers on the basis of per user on a monthly, semi-annual, or yearly basis.

5

Support

The right cloud hosting provider offers you the customer support you need and is available at any time of the day for 365 days - holidays included. Please ask clearly about the support provided by the provider as some of them offer it for free (the amount is included in your subscription) while some charge extra for the same.

It is advised to stay away from vendors who charge extra for it as the majority of them offer it for free.

The quality of support also varies. Some vendors offer support over email only (that will take time) while some offer support over chat and phone (that offers an instant solution). Please ensure that the support team is experienced and has qualified engineers that can address the issue and understand it easily.

99.999%

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Uptime

Uptime is the duration of uninterrupted services offered by your hosting provider. Ideally, uptime should be 100%, but in the real world, it is almost impossible to achieve. A competent cloud hosting provider would offer an uptime of 99.999%, i.e., around 5.25 minutes of downtime per year.

It is important that the hosting provider mentions the guaranteed uptime in the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Server Performance

Some business owners do not think of performance as an important factor and focus more on the pricing of the solution. However, when it comes to cloud hosting, the IT infrastructure and its performance are of utmost importance.

Reputed cloud hosting providers offer an IT infrastructure with HPCs (High-Performance Computing servers). This means that the server on which your applications will be hosted delivers high-performance without any lag.

Good server performance will act as a catalyst for your business to reach greater heights. This parameter is enough to differentiate between substandard and good hosting providers.

8

Data Backup

Most cloud hosting providers offer data backup services. However, the duration of this data backup depends upon your plan. Also, the frequency of the backup process varies from one service provider to another. Some hosting providers offer daily backups while some backup your data every week.

It is also important that the hosting provider offers an automated backup solution, so the entire process becomes hassle-free.

9

BCDR

BCDR means Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery. It's the capability of the hosting provider to ensure that your business does not suffer in case a disaster such as an earthquake strikes. This is achieved by replicating the data in multiple data center locations.

Hence, if one data center is hit by a disaster, your access can be shifted to another data center. The hosting provider is also responsible for identifying potential business risks and taking measures to limit its impact.

Please make sure that hosting providers do not charge for BCDR; it is included in your subscription fees.

Ace Cloud Hosting's Unique Approach to Cloud Hosting

In addition to the points mentioned above, Ace Cloud Hosting (ACE) believes that cloud hosting is much more than deploying an application or website over the Internet. The services need to be customized according to your needs to complement your business. We make sure that the onboarding process is smooth and is executed with minimal disruption to your daily operations.

While operating in the virtual environment, the aim is to make the user experience as smooth as possible by offering immediate allocation or reallocation of resources (if needed).

For instance, during the times when the workload is more than usual, you can opt for increased memory and performance of a particular server. You can also host multiple applications as a part of the same cloud solution so that your business processes become smoother and save your time, energy, and money.

Ace Cloud Hosting's services are scalable, flexible, and reliable, with 99.999% guaranteed uptime; the solutions are designed for delivering superior hassle-free user experience. The offerings include enterprise-level data security and state-of-the-art technology. We have multiple data centers across the USA with infrastructure redundancy while following all necessary regulations and norms.

References

1. [Gartner Says By 2020, a Corporate "No-Cloud" Policy Will Be as Rare as a "No-Internet" Policy Is Today](#) – Gartner

2. [New McAfee Report Finds Eighty-Seven Percent of Companies Experience Business Acceleration from Use of Cloud Services](#) - Business Wire

3. [IDC Forecasts Public IT Cloud Services Spending Will Reach $127 Billion in 2018 as the Market Enters a Critical Innovation Stage](#) - Business Wire

4. [Checklist: How To Choose A Cloud Provider](#) - Ace Cloud Hosting

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