



How c@nnectivity
is enabling better
business for all



Connectivity is everywhere

Spotify. Netflix. Dropbox. Whatsapp. Cloud-based applications like these are part of daily life now. And the amount we use them makes constant data connection a necessity for living in the digital age. It's no different for small-to-medium sized enterprises. All businesses are digital businesses now.


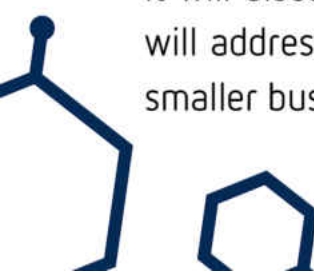
Whether you sell hand-carved tables or online services, you rely on digital technology to run your company and meet the needs of customers. And, increasingly, businesses are consuming many of their critical applications from the cloud, which is also where they're storing their data.

Using the likes of Office 365, Amazon Web Services, Dropbox, Sage (the list goes on), anything from crucial voice infrastructure to file storage to the timesheets system can be hosted. Doing so allows businesses to create efficiencies, reduce costs, and pioneer new products or ways of working that give them an edge over competitors.

All of this means that connectivity is a critical enabler for business. To support an ecosystem of cloud-based services and infrastructure, the requirement for robust and well-engineered data services cannot be overlooked.

This eGuide explores the benefits quality connectivity can bring to organisations and what can be done to unlock them.

It will discuss the risks that businesses expose themselves to by not prioritising this aspect of operations. And, crucially, it will address the misconception that the data services necessary to run cloud applications successfully are out of reach for smaller businesses.



How cloud c@nnectivity can enable better business

By putting communications services, applications and data in the cloud, business can yield huge benefits.

And, because robust data connectivity is the key to giving organisations access to this cloud ecosystem, it can facilitate the following:



Greater scalability



With cloud-based services, you can quickly and easily scale provision to your business needs. New users can be added instantly. You only pay for what you use. And if you need to increase capacity at crucial moments - as a retailer might at Christmas, for example - then that can be done with minimal admin and zero disruption to other users.

More manageable costs



Most cloud applications are monthly subscription services, meaning that businesses can better manage their costs. Moving from capital expenditure to operational expenditure leads to long-term savings that keep the bottom line healthy and outgoings predictable.

Greater redundancy measures



In the digital age, service loss can be disastrous. Suddenly becoming unavailable to customers can lead to damaging loss of revenue and reputation, especially for small businesses. Cloud services typically have robust backup measures in place to mitigate any service loss, meaning that companies can rest assured there will be no crippling downtime.

Getting rid of costly on-premise hardware



Having physical infrastructure like a data server onsite can be incredibly expensive - both to install and maintain. Shifting storage to the cloud removes this large capital outlay. What's more, all maintenance and upgrades are done by the supplier behind the scenes and at no additional cost.

Productivity and efficiency gains



Cloud services such as Slack, G-Suite or Salesforce increase efficiencies by housing everything in one centralised place.

They reduce the amount of time spent looking for files or tracking down information, and improve collaboration and file sharing among employees. Plus, because these apps are usually optimised for mobile, tablet and PC, it's much easier for employees to access their professional applications wherever they are, and on whichever device they have to hand.

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Getting closer to customers



Embracing these kinds of solutions will ultimately allow businesses to provide a better service to end customers, whether that's by delivering more convenient digital experiences or developing compelling products and services.

However, all of it rests on one crucial component...



Enabling maximum connectivity with data services

If you want to realise the benefits outlined here and make new ways of working a reality, powerful data services are a must. If your business is going to successfully build its operational model around cloud services and applications, it needs the connectivity to support that.

To ensure you choose the right data services for your business, the types of cloud applications being used should be considered. For example, are you planning to have capabilities such as voice delivered over the internet? Poor quality connectivity used for VoIP can result in low call quality or even call loss. When a customer is contacting your business, this could be the difference between a profitable sale and harmful lost revenue.

The same goes for cloud-based business applications or data storage. Throttled connections to a cloud CRM system could lead to failure in processing customer orders. While an inability to access business data stored in the cloud could bring an entire organisation to a standstill. Having the right connectivity solution that suits the needs of your business is crucial.



Connectivity for all

Many people understand that powerful connectivity is the key to running cloud applications successfully (and therefore, running their business successfully). But they believe that the data services they need to power this aren't available to them.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The growth in the availability of connectivity services and the number of providers around has expanded the number of solutions on the market. What's more, because of this increased choice, there are options to suit a variety of budgets and requirements.

This means that businesses must do their homework when it comes to choosing a suitable provider. One size doesn't fit all. Businesses should look for a provider that meets their needs by offering a range of cloud-based connectivity services:

Business broadband:

- Business-only network is used so that business traffic doesn't have to compete with consumer traffic
- The network is built so that it is geographically-resilient and businesses with multiple sites can be accommodated
- It should provide sufficient bandwidth to support the size of the business and cloud services/applications used (i.e. Azure, Office365, G-Suite)

Ethernet

- Can deliver highly reliable, fast and secure connectivity with the flexibility to scale
- Dedicated and uncontended Ethernet services are suitable for cloud connectivity
- Can be used to consolidate voice and data into one connection





Voice networks:

- Connectivity is designed to deliver quality voice and data traffic, or the ability to prioritise certain types of traffic (i.e. voice) for optimal performance High-performance network that delivers fast throughput (as opposed to headline speed) and minimised delay
- Customers can benefit from a single point of contact for data and IP voice networks, leading to reduced administration burden

For all types of connectivity, businesses should look for providers who can also deliver:

- A choice of suitable data access services that can match their needs now and in the future (e.g. budget, number of office sites)
- Best-in-class resiliency/backup measures, stringent SLAs and robust security
- 24/7 customer support in the event of an issue


Want to learn more?

By now you know that connectivity is the key to unlocking the future of your business. But with so many potential suppliers to choose from, where do you start?

We can help you understand your requirements and find a solution that meets your needs. We have a variety of resources to help you understand the different types of connectivity available to your business, the ways of working they can support, and the specific solution sets that can make it happen.

If you want to learn more, please get in touch.





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