

CLOUD DRIVES OUTSOURCING OF IT

Cloud computing is driving the adoption of IT outsourcing, explains Jason Connolly, director at Next Generation IT.



Many local businesses have embraced cloud computing, improving their competitiveness and also the flexibility to quickly grow, shrink or relocate their business. Partnering with local IT specialists to buy-in services has enabled forward-looking companies to focus on their core business, allowing them the flexibility to take advantage of new opportunities as and when they arise.

This means that few small businesses employ teams of internal IT staff. Coupled with this, the demands on technical staff and resources has never been greater:

- **Pace of change in technology** – the complexity of IT systems is growing at an exponential rate. Organisations want to take advantage of new, more advanced technologies but the reality is that no one person can know everything about IT and building a team of staff is costly.
- **GDPR** – this regulation introduces complexity and demands on IT personnel and infrastructure that is expensive and time consuming to meet. GDPR requires policies, procedures and controls that can be very difficult, if not impossible, to implement on legacy onsite systems.
- **Data security** – cyber-attacks are more complex, persistent and frequent than ever before. Mitigation of these threats is becoming more onerous for small businesses in terms of both time and expense.

WHY OUTSOURCE?

Outsourcing IT provides a shortcut for many businesses to tackle these

issues effectively and access the necessary know-how, capability and experience to meet the expanding requirements of modern businesses:

- **Cost savings** – cost is the primary reason many organisations buy-in IT services. Economies of scale allows the outsource provider to more efficiently provide the service.
- **Quality of service** – IT providers gain a wealth of experience supporting many different organisations. Consequently, specialist IT companies can draw on this experience to provide a consistently high level of service.
- **Access to specialised skills** – IT is becoming a more diverse and complex discipline. No one person can be an expert in every area of IT. Smaller businesses can gain access to specialist resources that only larger companies could afford to employ.
- **Flexibility** – in these uncertain times, buying in service can give the ability to grow and shrink the service with your needs. Minimising costs in austerity, and providing the capability to grow resources rapidly, when growth returns.
- **Avoiding staffing issues** – the recruitment, management and training of staff can be a real headache, especially within the constraints of a fixed local labour market. Buying in IT resource minimises this drain on a company's resources and frees up key staff to focus on the core business. Good IT people, particularly knowledgeable staff, with the right

organisational and communication skills, are difficult to find.

- **Risk mitigation** – IT providers employ a pool of people to call on. The role of technical staff has grown and now includes cyber security, GDPR, technical aspects of compliance and managing policies and procedures.
- **Management and control** – a good outsource service does not just provide an engineer but also management resource. This ensures service level agreements are met, employees are motivated, and advice and communication is available to management teams.

KNOW YOUR CLOUD PROVIDER

Many of our clients outsource the provision of their IT systems and support and rely entirely on us to meet their current and future IT needs and challenges.

It is important to take the time to select a business with a proven track record and reputation, security expertise and knowledge of local data protection requirements.

The following questions should be asked:

- Is your provider following the requisite industry standards and best practice?
- What evidence can they provide to back this up?
- Is your data stored in the right jurisdiction, who has access to it and what controls are in place to keep it safe and secure? ■